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ABSTRACT

A case study tested the premise that people cope with ambiguity in particular ways within an organizational context, negotiating for understanding and choice through the manipulation of power, ideology, and technology. The study focused on the implementation of a satellite communications network in local Catholic Church offices and on staff members' positive and negative perceptions of ambiguity that resulted from the new system. Results showed that ambiguity was reduced within the offices through the use of power, ideology, and technology. From an external perspective, ambiguity was used in a positive way to open up possibilities for the creative use of technology, for renegotiating the goals of the Catholic Communications Network, and for realigning the power structure of the communication system of the Church. (FL)

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Negotiation Through Power, Ideology, and Technology in the Local Development of the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America

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ABSTRACT

This case study of the implementation of a satellite communications network in local Catholic Church offices examines staff members' positive and negative perceptions of ambiguity which resulted from the new system. People responded to the ambiguous situations with negotiating strategies based on power, ideology, and technology either to reduce ambiguity or to take maximum advantage of it.

Negotiation through Power, Ideology, and Technology
in the Local Development of
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Despite the philosophers' desire for clear and distinct ideas and their work toward that end, the world remains rather muddled and uncertain. Despite organizational theorists' desires for managed and predictable environments, the world remains perhaps even more muddled for organizations. Problems might have more than one solution; different choices seem equally useful; lower order participants want a voice. Unexpected events still occur. The situation remains ambiguous.

Ambiguity functions in any system--from the smallest organism to a large formal organization. Organizations usually perceive ambiguity more quickly as a negative factor in order to come to terms with it and reduce it; positive aspects of ambiguity often go unnoticed. Traditionally, research has investigated ambiguity as an organizational shortcoming, despite some contrary evidence (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 206). More properly, however, ambiguity is a condition for the possibility of organization.

The thesis of this study is that people cope with ambiguity in particular ways within an organizational context, negotiating for understanding and choice through the manipulation of power, ideology, and technology. Where the ambiguity is perceived as a threat, people employ the strategies to deny it, explain it or channel it; where ambiguity operates in a positive manner, people within the organization can experience more creativity, heighten understanding of competing ideologies, and engage in greater participation within the system.

The evaluation of ambiguity in organizations varies. Rational choice remains a goal, even though people recognize that such choices are not always possible due to limitations or awareness of alternatives, imprecise information about known alternatives, or even unclear goals (March & Olsen, 1975, p. 148). Weick's theory of loose-coupling between organizational units develops precisely this point and he urges a more creative approach to organizational analysis (Weick, 1979). More recent literature stresses the positive role of ambiguity. "By doing things 'for no good reason', organizations discover preferences that they subsequently recognize as better. Ambiguity in preferences treats this process of change in a more direct manner--and probably in a more efficient

manner--than does an emphasis on precision and consistency. Coherence and consistency limit learning of new purpose." (March & Shapira, 1982, p. 25). Such ambiguity becomes an important element in moving organizations to new states. "If an organization is to advance across the boundary between a control system and an open system, it may need to be flooded (emphasis in original) with variety. Otherwise the control system will have time to develop buffers against a gradually developing complexity in the environment" (Pondy & Mitroff, 1979, p. 23.) Ambiguity, then, emerges as a positive factor for organization, even though it does not always please rational decision makers.

Described in terms of decision-making, ambiguity is uncertainty. Choices are available only where enough uncertainty allows the generation and selection of options. If there is no uncertainty, the choice of action is already determined by the situation--whether externally imposed or resulting from prior internal choices. In terms of understanding, ambiguity results from the inability to fit new information into previously determined categories. Ambiguity thus offers the system an opportunity to construct new categories. In these ways, ambiguity is the condition for the possibility of organization--the organization of action and understanding.

Described in the terminology of information theory (where "information" is whatever reduces uncertainty of prediction or choice), ambiguity is negentropy--energy added in order to maintain the system by increasing its randomness. Too much information actually closes off the system and reduces its ability to act. And so, from the point of view of the organization, ambiguity's role is determined as negative or positive depending on the prior state of the system. In a disorganized system, ambiguity does not exist, only information since the system needs order, not randomness. However, "if the system is organized, the elements are in relation to one another and are therefore different and similar at the same time. Here ambiguity arises. From a point of view within the system, the transmission of information along a given circuit from one element to another subtracts ambiguity because it is a noise, an obstacle to the message. For an observer outside the system, ambiguity must be added, for it increases the system's complexity. It functions in this case as information at the level of the unit's organization." (Serre, 1982,pp. 79-80). From either perspective ambiguity creates the condition for organization. In the first case, ambiguity provides the material which organization channels and directs. In the second, ambiguity situates the organization and provides a ground against which its operation becomes apparent.

The role of ambiguity can also be seen to operate on larger or societal levels. Ambiguity can be linked to Habermas' notion of crisis. In the terminology of critical theory, "social systems adapt inner nature to society with the help of normative structures in which needs are interpreted and actions licensed or made obligatory" (Habermas, 1975, p. 9). The social structure reduces ambiguity by predetermining a course of action or understanding. Strong social structures constrain the possibility for participation, what Habermas calls discursive will formation, a product of both understanding and choice. Ambiguity, which opens up the system for participation, enters through the breakdown of internal agreement, through the dissolution of distorted or closed-off communication, through the imposition of new structures, and through the injection of new social interpretation. This creates the condition for a crisis in which new understanding and choice can emerge. The advent of the new structures forces reflection and allows action choices. From a point of view within social structure, ambiguity is a negative element which must be reduced because it weakens the structure's domination; from a point of view outside their structure, ambiguity provides the positive condition for understanding, action, and change.

In these views, ambiguity defines an organization as an ongoing process of understanding and choice. Structures channel ambiguity (see Pondy & Mitroff): policy transforms uncertainty into decision and action choices; interpretive frameworks put new information into established categories.

The role of ambiguity in organization--perceived as a negative factor or as a positive factor--emerges more clearly in a concrete case study. In September 1982 the United States Catholic Conference--an organization of the American Catholic Bishops--saw the first broadcasts of the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America (CTNA), a wholly owned subsidiary. The New York based network functions primarily as a delivery system, supplementing the existing communication efforts of the Catholic Church, but with the added goals of cutting the cost of existing services and increasing the number of people touched by the church's evangelization and catechical (that is, outreach and education) efforts. Access to the growing cable television industry and increasing financial competition from the evangelical "electronic church" for broadcast access spurred the Catholic project.

Each of the 172 diocesan administrative units of the Catholic church in the United States has the option of joining the CTNA as do also large Catholic institutions such as universities, hospitals or province administrations of religious communities of priests,

sisters or brothers. CTNA provides only religious and educational television and radio programming for its clients at this time; however, the services which the network is also capable of providing include teleconferencing, electronic mail, telelecturing, photo distribution, newswire and data transmission. Local members of the network must make arrangements for distribution of CTNA materials through cable systems or through some kind of tape library accessible to local churches.

Church and CTNA officials describe the network as a development of an already existing Catholic communications structure. And yet the introduction of this new technology has had profound effects on local communication offices and structures within the Church. This study examines five local communications offices of the Catholic Church--three which have affiliated themselves with the CTNA and two which have not but plan to in the next several years. While each office had its own interests, goals, and problems, their responses to the CTNA are more similar than dissimilar.

The new CTNA technology introduced massive amounts of ambiguity into the Catholic Church's communication offices. Insofar as this ambiguity confused the organizational structuring, organization members negotiated for understanding and action through the manipulation of power, ideology, and technology. Where the ambiguity opened the system, people chose modifications of the same strategies to increase creative possibilities and participation. The CTNA emerges from these negotiations as an organizational network constituted by power relationships, competing ideologies, and technological forces.

Ambiguity as a Negative Factor

The negative view of ambiguity is accompanied by the use of power for control; by apologies, explanations, and interpretations; and by technologically-driven decisions. All these instances characterize the local implementation of the CTNA.

Power, one of the traditional categories of organizational research, refers to the implementation of choices within the organization and to the definition of the organization itself (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 327). It is a reality recognized by all and present in the CTNA development. According to the metaphor of one communications director, "When you have a new king, you have a new castle and a new castle guard." Where ambiguity is perceived as a threat to the system, clarity and direction are most likely to be negotiated through the exercise of power.

One major way in which ambiguity has been reduced in the CTNA implementation was the manner of the decision making. The American Catholic Bishops, meeting as the National Council of Catholic Bishops, voted in June of 1979 to fund research into the possibilities of the CTNA and later approved the incorporation of the CTNA in September 1981. The same pattern appears on the local levels. A common experience was that bishops consulted with their communication staffs and simply decided to enter into the CTNA; often a negative recommendation of the staffs was overruled. One director remembered, "Our recommendation was to wait a year and let the kinks get worked out. . . .The Bishop decided not to; he said we're gonna go with it now. . . .the two bishops came back from the bishops' meeting in Minneapolis and somebody had really sold them a bunch of salt up there because within a week we were signed up and going. At this point, if the bishop wants to go with it, we'll go with it and do the best we can." Another corroborated this account. "Basically, we didn't want to do it right now because we figured we had everything they were going to offer and there was no reason for us to do this. Then we got a letter in the mail which said if you subscribe now, they'd knock $1,500 off the price. I called the bishop and said something to him and he said, "Let's do it." I called _____ back and within five minutes we had entered into this $30,000 contract." This authority-based decision making reduces the ambiguity and the range of choice for the system as a whole. It also charts a course for the direction of the local communication office, at least in terms of continued existence and financial support. The CTNA becomes the bishop's project and the bishop takes on a proprietary interest in the local CTNA at budget hearings.

Another manifestation of the use of power within the CTNA decision structure concerns programming and access. A satellite telecommunications system makes much greater amounts of data and programming available to greater numbers of people. Because of questions raised about doctrinal content of CTNA programming, the bishops decided to scramble the signal, thus making it unavailable to unauthorized users. According to Bishop Louis Gelineau, chairman of the CTNA board, "In addition, because of the very nature of the specific system we have designed, the bishops will retain control of programming and information services on the local level. The CTNA will go through the dioceses--not over and around them." (Gelineau, 1981, pp. 38-39). In this way, the bishops as top decision makers can channel new information and limit ambiguity within their local organizations. Ironically though, this factor makes the CTNA less

suitable as a delivery system for large areas since outlying cable systems will not be able to use the signal without the payment of additional fees by the local dioceses and the installation of scramblers (ranging in price from $1,00 to $5,000). In places where 10 or 20 cable systems seek access to the CTNA, the individual dioceses find that the added cost mean that they have sacrificed accessibility for the sake of information management.

A similar situation exists in the determination of programming and program content. Small groups of decision makers screen programs for their doctrinal suitability at both the national level of the CTNA and at the local levels. Even though this task is often routine or done by spot checks, the impact of these decisions reduces the new information entering the system. Administrative power functions to reduce the overall ambiguity.

The programming issue highlights another way in which administrative power preempts participation. Only one of the offices studied had done any kind of needs analysis for the services they would offer through the implementation of the CTNA; this one had surveyed other administrative personnel within the diocesan structure. By and large the Catholic population which funded the CTNA through free will offerings to the Catholic Communications Campaign collections (and who make up the targeted audience for the network's television and radio programming) has had little input into the utilization of the CTNA and its programming. For these lower order participants, the problem of ambiguity has been resolved; administrative choice has removed it.

A negative view of ambiguity regards ambiguity as something to be controlled; if it cannot be controlled, then members of the system tend to feel uncomfortable about it. This prompts apologies, explanations and interpretations of the situation--that is, the management of ambiguity through ideology. In the negative view of ambiguity, organizational uncertainty must be avoided by fitting new information into an acceptable structure, both for cognitive resolution by individual members and for the possibility of moving that information around the system.

The CTNA itself comprises the source of choice for the local communication offices. Its technology offers new choices and its structure and rationale must be "sold" to other local level personnel, including funding agencies. Within the Catholic Church several different ideologies are utilized to explain and justify the CTNA, three drawn from Church sources and two from business enterprises. Each one affects how the CTNA actually gets implemented on the local level.

The bishops have characterized the CTNA from its beginning as a part of the pastoral ministry of the Church. This particular framing uses traditional ecclesiastical language to justify the enterprise to Church members. "We need it not primarily for business reasons but even more for pastoral reasons, to be an effective witness to the resurrection in a world dominated by technology, especially the technology of communications" (Dempsey, 1981, p. 1). Local level administrators echo this appeal and regard CTNA as an effective part of their attempt at pastoral education and outreach. Each local director interviewed recounted at least one success story of their television programming reaching the unchurched, the disaffected, or the troubled.

Another very strong traditional Church justification for the introduction of new methods or expenses is education. This too figured in the local accounts of the CTNA decisions. Every local director judged that the primary beneficiary of the CTNA system would be the educational efforts of the church. For example, when asked about how the CTNA would be useful, one staff member remarked, "I think that the Church will want to use it more for educational purposes because that has always been the tradition of the Catholic Church--to educate more than to transmit information." The CTNA does feature educational programming for use in Catholic schools; it provides general interest programming for cable systems which can serve to inform the Catholic and non-Catholic populations about the Church; and it is scheduled to begin several series for adult education: continuing education of religious professionals, and Bible and theology courses designed for laity.

A third ideology which complements the educational one is one based in elitism and paternalism. Hidden within the educational goals of the system lies a sense that the CTNA directors or the local directors know what is truly Catholic and what is best for the people and will provide programing on that basis. One group felt that complaints about programming's possible liberal bias (see, for example, Frawley, 1982) could be dealt with by "starting where they are and leading them where they should be." A similar sense of paternalism affects the Church claim that the CTNA system will not be used for domination. Rather than offering any systematic protection, Bishop Gelineau merely states that his board is aware of the problem that technology can depersonalize or enslave. He assures his audience, "The lay as well as episcopal members of the CTNA board will guard against that threat" (Gelineau, 1981, p. 38). A similar response came from a diocesan director who maintained that "it all depends on getting the right personnel."

If these ideological justifications for CTNA and for its structure emerge from ecclesiastical traditions, still others come from American capitalism. Since the CTNA is a for-profit corporation, it describes its enterprise in financial terms. One strong argument for the establishment of the network was to cut costs of Church television and radio production through the sharing of common resources and to cut costs of conference travel and telephone use by supplying a teleconferencing system wholly owned by the Church. This financial thinking is reproduced on the local levels as well; dioceses join CTNA to increase services (educational, pastoral) without increasing their own production costs. Moreover, local production facilities which distribute CTNA materials hope to be cost-effective by selling their own programs and leasing their facilities to other users. However, the cost-effective argument has its limits as some have already noted. One director estimates an additional budget cost of $34,000 just for video tape and a part-time staffer to record the signal.

Finally, the American capitalist economy as applied to radio and television has even futher determined CTNA. The choice of the network model--a central distribution system with regional affiliates--recreates the structure of such commercial networks as ABC, CBS, and NBC. Apparently this model of telecommunications network is so strong that no other alternatives were considered. Such a model constrains local access, reinforces hierarchical and one-way communication, and further defines the Church as a distribution network rather than as a community. In this way, CTNA works against the pastoral ideology it espouses.

Each of these ideologies serves to explain or interpret the ambiguity created within the Catholic Church communication structure by the establishment of CTNA. At the same time, when none of these worked, respondents apologized for the confusion or ambiguity in the situation or for their inability to categorize their experiences with the CTNA. This discomfort testifies to the negative value placed on the ambiguity within the overall system.

Finally, the participants in the CTNA utilized technology to further reduce the ambiguity of the situation. Decisions came to be made on the basis of technology, allowing this external force to dominate or define the options open to the local offices. The role of technology in reducing one level of ambiguity shows clearly in three instances.

If viewed solely as a delivery system, CTNA is superfluous to the Church's communication program. Structures already existed to accommodate each of the needs

cited in the CTNA literature. Program distribution (both television and radio) employed mail or courier services; some of the new CTNA members had, in fact, already possessed all of the programming available during the initial phase of the CTNA operation. News service is still available through landlines and teletype services as is audio conferencing or even data transmission. The technology adds a more sophisticated and expedient delivery system; the decision to make the switch followed the allure of technological possibilities, despite local doubts. In the words of one director, "Why use a Cadillac when a moped will do?" More basic questions raised by the communication officers regarding the use of these materials so distributed were also left unanswered. Many had already experienced under-use of the materials possessed. "We had one parish that was very gung-ho on it [use of such resources] for about six months, but all of a sudden it just died out. The DRE [director of religious education] that was pushing it just got too busy with other things." The ambiguity of this situation was drastically reduced (or even bypassed) for upper level managers by choosing the technological option.

Second, the network structure for distribution emerged as a byproduct of the technology. By choosing a satellite system with downlinks to each diocesan office, a stepwise distribution structure was almost necessarily imposed: from CTNA to the local office; from the local office to cable systems or schools; from cable systems or schools to homes or students. The predetermined structure again reduces the uncertainty of multiple possibilities, but again at the cost of shifting tape duplication labor and costs to the local offices.

Third, the technology served to reduce the ambiguity regarding the functions of the local offices. With the CTNA in place, local affiliates more clearly regarded their purposes to include distribution of CTNA materials and production of supporting materials. The external constraint of CTNA riches has, however, added a very definite burden to local efforts: that of a program schedule. Programming pressures followed the technology, demanding a set number of current programming hours per week. While this demand significantly narrowed the range of ambiguity, it also imposed a very different set of strains on the organization.

The technologically-driven decisions and options may have limited choices and lessened the ambiguity in the system on one level; it also increased work load, created new decision situations, and heightened awareness on other levels. Thus, as a strategy for negotiating understanding and choice, technology is a mixed blessing. More clearly

than the other strategies, it adds ambiguity to the system as well as reducing it. Where ambiguity is perceived as a negative factor, only some aspects of technology aid the organization. The dual possibilities of technology and its use highlight, though, the thesis of this paper--that the strategies of negotiation (technology, ideology, power) function in systems under conditions where the ambiguity is considered a negative factor as well as in those where it is a positive factor.

Ambiguity as a Positive Factor

Although from perspectives within organized systems people often view ambiguity as a negative factor, the local implementation of the CTNA suggests that ambiguity also fulfills a positive function in organized systems. In this case ambiguity is analogous to the Oklahoma land rushes in which anyone could stake a claim to government lands. Acquiring territory was an ambiguous task in many respects--one did not know what land was available, whether it could be farmed profitably, how one's family would fare, or whether the claim would be recognized. However, the move to stake a claim did open up possibilities previously closed to persons on all societal levels. The ambiguity of the land rush injected life into the American west and re-ordered the structure of frontier society.

The Catholic bishops' establishment of the CTNA is a similar attempt to stake a claim in telecommunication. In fact, the language of some documents manifests a similar sense of urgency so the Church doesn't lose out on opportunities (Dempsey, 1981, p. 2). "The bishops felt that the fundamentalist evangelists had jumped so much into this that they felt that we've got to get in there and get part of the action."

Lower order participants have a similar opportunity to stake a claim in the telecommunications efforts of the Church due to the CTNA. Because the bishops do not know a great deal about the system, lay and clerical staff members are asked to enter the decision making processes and to oversee the day-to-day operations of production and distribution. Some lower staff members already have taken on the duties of program supervision, despite the fact that they lack the theological training to check doctrinal points. "At the UNDA (Catholic Broadcaster Association) convention they were talking about who's deciding what goes on the air. They said they can't preview every program; some of it automatically goes on--anything not syndicated. Whoever's there, there's just a couple of people in the office, will scan it. They're just happy to get anything on the air. As for here, we'll have five on the staff. I guess it'll just be my responsibility

to decide." Local production centers also have the opportunity to sell their programs to the CTNA for national distribution and to negotiate with cable franchises to supply such locally produced programming. "CTNA is good for us too; we can send our programs to New York and see them on national TV. They will also pay us for what we send them." In this perspective the CTNA has introduced massive amounts of uncertainty into the Catholic communications structure and provides opportunities for creatively adapting and "re-inventing the technology through new applications" (Rice & Rogers, 1980), for greater understanding of the communicative system, and for more participation on all levels.

The three strategic areas noted in connection with the reduction of negatively viewed ambiguity also figure into the equation of positively viewed ambiguity. While power, ideology, and technology were used to negotiate understanding and choice in ambiguous situations, the three also become privileged areas to study the positive effects of ambiguity. The clearest immediate example is technology.

It has already been noted that technologically-driven decisions concurrently reduced ambiguity in one part of the system and created it in another. CTNA technology on the local level has increased the range of choice available to program directors: they have more programs from which to choose and they have more authority to make those choices. More than one program director doubted that the bishops would even watch cable programming, much less review program content. When asked whether the bishops would watch the CTNA programming, one director replied, "I doubt it, I seriously doubt it." Another mentioned that the local bishop didn't have cable TV and didn't plan to get it. Further he even refused to appear on locally produced programming.

In addition the technology has injected more information into the Church communication structure. Because of common interests and tasks regional groups of communication directors meet to plan grant requests, to engage in lobbying efforts, and to avoid duplication of efforts. Similarly, people tend to know more about what is happening in other geographical areas of the United States Catholic Church than their own (Unda Newsletter, 1983).

Finally, the technology has involved more people in the traditionally top-down message structure of the Catholic Church. Production centers cannot be run by one person; few clerics have any training or background in telecommunications so more lay members of the Church take on positions of authority in the communication offices. Some communications offices are attempting to foster greater participation in the use of communications materials on the parish level.

Ideological issues also reveal the positive side of ambiguity. Introduction of the CTNA provides an environment conducive to setting opposing ideologies in juxtaposition to one another. Ambiguity itself emerges with the breakdown of ideological hegemony. When one particular societal interpretation no longer dominates, others offer competing explanations. In this competition, each is revealed as an ideology, allowing people to understand the distortions introduced and to create their own explanations. For example, the promotional literature for CTNA stresses centralized educational, financial, and network benefits and services, despite the insistence on local autonomy by communication directors--the "principle of subsidiarity," one termed it. However, the implementation of the network creates enough ambiguity to allow other explanatory models. For example, models of lay ministry accompany CTNA because the network is run by laity. CTNA privileges economic and cost-effective models along with the Church's more other-worldly concerns. Education and domination vie for ideological supremacy. Although the network stresses a technological centralization through national production and central uplink facilities, the establishment of local production centers serves a purpose similar to having an uplink facility. The local centers generate local interpretations and explanations of the Church and offers these in addition to the centralized message.

A second example of the local interpretation of CTNA policy occurs with the use of the system itself. According to Bishop Gelineau, the CTNA is a telecommunications system, not an entertainment network (Gelineau, 1981, p. 39) and the CTNA literature stresses its teleconferencing, high speed data transmission, wire service and other facilities. However, local directors view CTNA only as a television delivery system. This ideological clash is evident to CTNA planners: "Diocesan directors of communications are by and large broadcast oriented. No matter what we have said about CTNA as an information delivery service to assist the various elements of the church in her internal information needs, what they hear--and I think, as I said, what the bishops bought--was a program service" (Hirsch, 1982).

A third area of competing ideologies that emerges in the CTNA is the ongoing confrontation between liberal and conservative interests in the Church. What does the Church really stand for? When media coverage and communication increase, people become aware of their own placement on the doctrinal spectrum. Uninformed unity is much easier than informed consent. A conservative viewer must take account of a different perspective and a liberal one recognize the limitation of that position

in the context of traditional values. The current debate about the American bishops' pastoral letter on peace intensified only after its wide coverage in the national news media. Such haphazard coverage will be regularized by CTNA, a move that will highlight the liberal-conservative discussion even more.

The systemic ambiguity weakens hegemonic ideologies and fosters new interpretations and creative possibilities. Finally an ambiguous situation allows for a rearrangement of power relationships. Low status workers can participate more fully in decision making and in the overall direction of the organization.

Several examples of this appear in the CTNA material. As has already been mentioned, program directors make theological choices in place of the bishops. Since bishops recognize their lack of technological expertise and at the same time want the system to succeed, staff members have been assured of autonomy on budget decisions and goal setting. All of the staff members interviewed expressed confidence in their bishop's support. The local staffs also take on powerful roles in determining the basic orientation of the system by deciding whether programming should be geared to internal or external purposes in the Church.

The ambiguous situation instigated by CTNA has opened up possibilities for the creative use of technology, for re-negotiating the understanding and purposes of the CTNA and for re-aligning the power structure of the communication system in the Church. However, this positive role of ambiguity does not guarantee that the system might lead to full participation or non-ideological interpretations. It is quite possible that the ambiguity which opens the system may be re-channelled in dysfunctional ways. For example, local directors could take advantage of their new authority to recreate an unresponsive top-down structure rather than seek input from those they serve. CTNA programming could be directed toward enthroning a new hegemony as the conservative church members fear (Frawley, 1982). Interestingly enough, a competing Catholic telecommunications delivery system also exists, but one run independently of the bishops. The Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) bills itself as "The Catholic Cable Network" and is funded by more conservative sources. This network emphasizes more traditional programming in both religious and entertainment categories. EWTN has plans to introduce even more ambiguity into the Catholic telecommunications scene by offering direct competition to CTNA with teleconferencing services as well as with its already existing programming schedule (EWTN, 1983). So, EWTN offers a good example of the use of technology to build a power base independent of the established Catholic hierarchy.

Conclusion

This study of the local implementation of the CTNA has followed several strategies for dealing with ambiguity. From a perspective within the system, ambiguity was reduced through the use of power, ideology, and technology. From an external perspective the areas of technology, ideology, and power showed the positive aspects of ambiguity in developing a new system. In a sense, both wrestle with the National Catholic Register's question: "Catholic Cablevid Has Arrived; Now What Do We Do With It?" (Frawley, 1982).

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